

REMARKS

Claims 5-9 remain in this application, while claims 1-4 were previously canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Specification paragraph 0021 is amended above to eliminate an inconsistency with the drawing figure.

Independent claim 5 is again rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), along with dependent claims 8 and 9, as anticipated by the Fowler patent relied on previously. Reconsideration is requested. Nothing in the Fowler patent disclosure supports the Examiner's conclusion, set forth in section 1 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, that the CO shift reaction stage 38 is adiabatic as claim 5 particularly requires. Nothing in the Fowler patent disclosure, moreover, suggests that the Fowler steam reformer 32 receives a product gas with a minimized oxygen content produced by an adiabatic, catalytic after-treatment stage as currently amended claim 5 particularly requires. The Fowler steam reformer 32 receives light gases consisting of hydrogen and carbon monoxide through the line 11 (see column 11, lines 3-6), methane for fuel through line 20 (see column 11, lines 18-23), steam or water through line 22 (see column 11, lines 28-30), and, optionally, polycyclic aromatics via line 47 (see column 11, lines 49-51), but does not receive a product gas with a minimized oxygen content produced by an after-treatment stage as currently amended claim 5 defines. It follows, therefore, that claim 5 as it appears above is not anticipated by the Fowler patent disclosure.

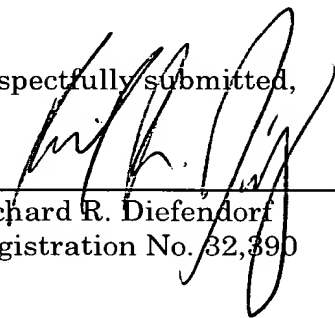
U.S. Patent 6,620,536 to Strobel et al. is relied on as a secondary reference in combination with the Fowler patent discussed above to reject claims 6 and 7. The Strobel et al. patent, however, fails to suggest modifying the configuration described in the Fowler patent disclosure so as to meet the limitations referred to above, and claim 1, in its present form, is patentable. The rest of the claims in this application depend on claim 1 and are patentable as well.

This application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #1748X/50331).

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Respectfully submitted,



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